

Leesburg Standing Residential Traffic Committee Minutes of Monday, June 28, 2004

The Leesburg Standing Residential Traffic Committee met on Monday, June 28, 2004, in the Lower Level Conference Room of the Municipal Government Center, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.

Members Present

Elizabeth Whiting, Chair
Planning Commissioner Ad Barns

Peg Coleman
Sandy Kane
Gabe Kelemen

Ricky Obaugh, firefighter

Town Staff Present

Calvin Grow
Mike Bomgardner
David Fuller
Mark McCartney

VRTA representatives

Mike Socha
John Bennick

Citizens present

Alan Partain
Chris Vogel

Tom Finkenbinder
Craig Lane

1. *Minutes:* On **motion** by Sandy Kane, **seconded** by Calvin Grow, the **minutes of the May 3, 2004 meeting were approved** with David Fuller abstaining.
2. *Public Comment:* (a) Chris Vogel of 820 Kenneth Place, S.E., a law enforcement officer for twelve (12) years, spoke against the all-way stop signs proposed for the intersection of Kenneth Place, S.E. and Randi Drive, S.E. stating that he doesn't see a problem or need for the signs in that location and that his position is shared by a number of his neighbors. (b) Tom Finkenbinder spoke in favor of the all-way stop sign proposal and referred the Committee to his comments from the May 3, 2004 meeting (the risk posed by poor sight distance to young children crossing the street to load the school bus each morning). (c) Alan Partain, a resident at 219 North King Street, presented the petitions he had collected within the specified thirty (30)-day period regarding the proposal for imposing the increased penalty of \$200.00 for speeding on North King Street from North Street north to the point where the speed limit changes to 35 mph. This section of North King Street was posted with signs during the same period, to the effect that "This area is recommended for imposition of a \$200.00 add-on penalty for speeding. Call 703-777-2420 for information.") Mr. Partain stated that he had visited the 36 homes identified in the materials approved by the Committee, and Town Attorney on review, and had made contact at 29 residences. Of those, 28 residents supported the petition; the one who declined did so because "he didn't want to get involved in anything political." Mr. Partain also advised that when he approached the St. Johns' clergy, as recommended by the Committee, the priest signed without hesitation, saying that it was more important to support public safety than convenience.
3. *Virginia Regional Transportation Association report:* Mike Socha introduced John Bennick and reported that he recently had been reviewing the usage of

established routes within the Town and County with a view toward revisions that would create efficiencies and that his board had set a goal of 25% increased rider ship. He presented a proposal for replacing the six (6) existing Leesburg routes within the Town with three (3), one (1) of which will be the trolley proposal designed to facilitate movement of tourists between outlying tourist destinations and the Downtown historic district. Mr. Socha indicated that by eliminating “stops” in areas where no one enters or exits the buses, VRTA would be able to promise a thirty (30)-minute maximum turnaround on each route, where at present the turnaround may be up to sixty (60) minutes depending upon the route. ADA van service and Safe-T-Ride will not be affected. Mr. Socha also related that the advance (24-hour) request service will still be available and should be able to serve the areas where the regular but unused routings are proposed for elimination. VRTA agreed to provide usage figures from the last six (6) months regarding fixed-route usage.

Mr. Socha reported that Safe-T-Ride service continues to grow, with May 2004 rider ship at 1162 and June at 1332. The Committee noted that the fence extension along the Bypass might add to those figures. Liz Whiting noted apologetically that she had failed to get out her Spring letter to Leesburg-area elementary and middle school PTAs and PTOs regarding the availability of Safe-T-Ride. The Committee encouraged issuing a press release notifying the public of the fence extension and encouraging use of Safe-T-Ride.

Mr. Socha and Kathleen Leidich, Assistant to the Town Manager, also discussed the proposed trolley service intended to promote tourist visitation from remote locations to the Downtown historic district. The Committee emphasized the need to make the interface between departing and embarking upon the trolley pedestrian-friendly and bringing the trolley deeply enough into the historic district to promote the goals of bringing remote-destination tourists into the Downtown retail area.

On motion by Sandy Kane, seconded by Calvin Grow, the Committee endorsed the VRTA plan to substitute three (3) routes of no more than thirty (30) minutes (circulation) for the existing six (6) Leesburg routes and recommended that the trolley route be designed to maximize opportunities for bringing tourists into the Historic Downtown, using both Market and Loudoun Streets and extending as far west as Wirt Street in order to promote access throughout the Downtown historic district. The Committee also voted to express their **satisfaction that the proposed changes will be made without diminishing the existing ADA and Safe-T-Ride services and that on-request service will be available to areas eliminated from the fixed routes.**

4. *Smart Trailer report:* Mark McCartney reported Smart Trailer results in the vicinity of #239-#243 Old Waterford Road, N.W. (25.09 mph average speed

with a 46 mph maximum speed) and Pershing Avenue, N.W. (19.24 mph average speed with a maximum speed of 37 mph).

5. *North King Street speed studies:* Staff reported that the eight people responding to the signs inviting input by telephone were evenly split between supporting and opposing the increased penalty for speeding proposed for a portion of North King Street. On **motion** by Gabe Kelemen, **seconded** by Calvin Grow, the Committee voted unanimously **to recommend the request for imposition of the additional \$200.00 penalty for speeding on North King Street in the residential district from North Street north to the change in speed to 35 mph.** The Committee also recommended that the property owners notified and people responding via petition and to the signs inviting comment by telephone be notified so far as practicable of proceedings at the Council level.
6. *Residential Traffic Management Plan update, etc.:* The Committee deferred this item to next meeting. Peg Coleman agreed with the deferral but wanted the Committee to note how important timely, comprehensive review of the policies are to the proper functioning and credibility of the process.
7. *All-way stop request at Kenneth Place, S.E. and Randi Drive, S.E.:* Liz Whiting reminded the Committee that it earlier endorsed the staff recommendation against installation of the all-way stop signs. Mike Bomgardner advised the Committee that the staff evaluation showed no speeding or sight distance problems and that their recommendation continued to be that the all-way stop signs were not warranted and should not be installed. Sandy Kane acknowledged the staff report and stated that the primary concern was the risk to children at that location, posed primarily by its designation as a school bus stop. After discussing various alternatives (motion to approve the all-way stops, motion to support the staff position and oppose the all-way stops or to do nothing, allowing the previous Committee decision supporting the staff recommendation to remain in effect), the Committee consensus was to leave the prior recommendation in effect. Sandy Kane advised that the number of young school children is not likely to fluctuate greatly over time, although the School system decision as to exactly where to locate stops is revisited on an annual basis. The Committee urged the citizens to participate in the bus stop location process; especially if they thought other locations in the vicinity were safer. Since the Committee consensus appeared to be recommending denial of the request, especially if the process of locating bus stops might solve the perceived problem, and allow renewed/new community concerns to raise the request fresh if appropriate next Fall, the Committee declined to revise its position from the April 5, 2004, vote.

8. *Bus Shelters:* Mike Bomgardner reported that plans for all three (3) shelters were under review and that the contracts for operation of the shelters was under review by the Town Attorney and the Loudoun County (on whose property two of the three bus shelters will be located).
9. *Traffic safety study on Catoctin Circle, N.E. between Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. and East Market Street:* Calvin Grow introduced the traffic studies produced by the developer of the shopping area proposed north of the Giant retail facilities east of Catoctin Circle, N.E., but indicated that the traffic signal improvements have been pushed back, probably two years, in the CIP. Liz Whiting and Gabe Kelemen reported that they had opposed inclusion of funds in the FY'05 CIP for intersection improvements at Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. and Catoctin Circle, N.E.; in light of the fact that the all-way stop signs presently are working well. Liz Whiting also noted that the Whitman, Requardt and Associates proposed improvements called for installing the year 2025-projected needs now and that the intersection design called for exactly the kind of improvement the Residential Traffic Task Force Report had repudiated at residential gateway--and that the Committee was trying to ameliorate at the intersection of South King Street and Fairfax Street, S.E.
10. *Speeding on Catoctin Circle, S.W. between Dry Mill Road, S.W. and South King Street:* Calvin Grow reported that this matter arose during the process by which the Town Council banned through-truck traffic along Davis/Lee Avenues in southwest Leesburg. Even though the likely effect will be to add through-truck traffic to Catoctin Circle, S.W. between South King Street and Dry Mill Road, S.W., the comments primarily focused on the need to attack speeding along Catoctin Circle, S.W. Staff speed studies confirmed that the average speed is 31 mph at the elementary school, and staff has referred the location to the Police Department for selective/enhanced enforcement. Results will be reported at the August meeting.
11. *FY '05 Budget:* Calvin Grow reported that the Town Council approved \$45,000.00 for traffic-calming projects. Liz Whiting recommended that rather than simply adding up items that total \$45,000.00 out of their \$190,000.00 budget request that the Committee plan to revisit the matter and see how they can maximize results.
12. *Calendar Conflicts:* The Committee set the next meeting for Monday, August 30th, to serve as the August/September meeting, figuring this would allow sufficient time for the Town to recruit any replacement members to the Committee for those declining reappointment or who may be replaced and would avoid conflicts with known absences at the beginning of August and the Labor Day holiday.

13. *Committee member concerns:* (a) Sandy Kane reported that: (i) She is now a firm supporter of the Bypass fencing, noting that when proceeding north toward a right turn from the Bypass onto Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. she had slowed, ultimately to a full stop, to allow five (5) bicyclists to complete their illegal crossing, all in the face of a green light at Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. (ii) A tree in the middle of the sidewalk on Cornwall Street, N.W. between North King Street and Wirt Street, N.W. forces pedestrians to walk in the road and the sidewalk is impassable for anyone in a wheelchair. (iii) The speed limit sign on Lawson Road, S.E., east of the intersection with Sycolin Road, S.E. has been missing for a long time. Calvin Grow is to investigate the matter of resetting the speed limit sign. (iv) Although the crosswalk across Kincaid Boulevard, S.E. at the community center is gorgeous, something must be done to make motorists stop when pedestrians are in the crosswalk. (b) Gabe Kelemen (i) discussed the inadequacy of signs for motorists looking for the Outlet mall, approaching Leesburg from the north on Route 15: "Leesburg Corner" gives no indication to drivers looking for the Outlet mall that they need to veer left onto the Bypass. Calvin Grow noted that VDOT follows strict restrictions regarding signage that identifies private property or enterprises. Gabe Keleman also questioned the signage identifying the route to the old and historic district. The Committee expressed their belief that signage for the Outlet mall and contrasting signage to the old and historic district be located in close proximity to each other. The Committee asked Calvin Grow to consult with Marantha Edwards regarding these issues and report back at the next meeting. (ii) Gabe Keleman also referred to her email correspondence regarding tour buses parked on Edwards Ferry Road, N.E. that are serving Dodona Manor and requested that the matter be deferred to the next SRTC meeting. (c) Liz Whiting noted with regret Vice Mayor Jackson's absence this evening. She proposes hosting a get-together for both continuing and graduating Committee members at which a proper farewell can be had and will get in touch later this summer with arrangements.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, August 30, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. Staff is to contact Liz Whiting if anything arises needing Committee consideration in the interim.